taken place and the second round is now in progress. India will work actively with other Member States towards widening and depending of tariff reductions and giving attention to non-tariff barriers, in the context of the goal of SAFTA at the turn of the century.

Standard of education in Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas

*75 SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of any complaints regarding deteriorating standard of education in Central and Navodaya Vidyalayas and

(b) if so, the nature of complaints and the steps taken/to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) (a) and (b) Occasional complaints have been received regarding the level of academic performance Continuous efforts are on to improve the quality of education in Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti through better supervision of academic activities, streamlining of recruitment procedure of teachers, establishment of Zonal Training Institutes for systematic in-service training of teachers and Principals and enccouragement of co-curricular activities.

Drop-out rate of Girl Students

*76. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the drop-out rate of girl students in the primary as well as in upper primary stages are higher than those of boys; and

(b) if so, the corrective steps taken/being taken to arrest this trend?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S R BOMMAI) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Policy on Education, 1986 lays special emphasis on the removal of gender disparities in education According to the Policy, the removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to and retention in elementary education will receive overriding priority

All States have exempted girls from payment of tuition fees upto Class-VIII Other measures for promotion of girls education include provision of scholarships, free text-books uniforms, attendance incentives, separate girls schools, construction of toilets for girls and appointment of women teachers in primary schools. Under the centrally sponsored scheme of Non-Formal Education, Central assistance provided for girls' centres is 90% as compared to 60% for co-education centres. The proportion of girls' centres has been increased from 25% to 40% in the Eighth Plan.

The introduction of Mid-day meal Scheme in 1995-96 is also expected to have a positive effect on enrolment and retention of girls in primary schools.

Internationally assisted projects for Universalisation of elementary education have specific components for promotion of girls education

The efforts made in this direction have resulted in narrowing of the gender gap in drop-out rates in Class I-V.

[Translation]

Shortage of Coal in Delhi

*77. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state

(a) whether there is acute shortage of coal in Delhi,

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to meet the shortage,

(c) the annual demand of coal for domestic and industrial use in Delhi; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government for supply of coal to meet the demand of Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) (a) to (d) The total quantity of coal supplied to industrial and other consumers, excluding power plants in Delhi during the year 1995-96 was 5 22 lakh tonnes as against a supply of 1 68 lakh tonnes in 1994-95 Availability having, thus, increased substantially, it is expected that any shortages would have eased.

The requirements of coal for various customers are assessed industry/sector-wise for the whole country and are not assessed Statewise This assessment is made by joint consultation among the various Ministries and the Planning Commission The demand for the industrial and other consuming sectors for the country as a whole was assessed at 44 20 Million Tonnes in 1995-96 and the supplies made were 41 21 Million Tonnes There is a gap between demand and supply and the Government is endeavouring to increase production of coal in order to meet the demands of all consumers including those in Delhi.